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Casing colors, 49th Trans. Bn. moves on

By Pfc. Abel Trevino Staff writer

Soldiers from the 49th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control) transferred authority to the 484th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control) in a ceremony Tuesday at LSA Anaconda.

Home stations for the 49th Trans. Bn.'s 31 movement control teams include 27 different states and Italy.

The mission of the 49th Trans. Bn. for the past year has been to coordinate and control the movement of all military equipment, including 785,882 vehicles moved over 538 million miles, said Lt. Col. Susan A. Davidson, 49th Trans. Bn. commander.

Davidson compared the mission her Soldiers completed with the analogy of moving two baseball stadiums full of people, their vehicles and property, simultaneously while not interfering with the play of the game.

Lt. Col. David Thomas, commander of the 484th Trans. Bn., said that his unit was looking forward to picking up the mission and has pledged that his entire chain of command is committed to taking movement control to the next level

"If I would give my Soldiers one piece of advice, (it would be) to stay positive about the mission and to learn all they can to support all the units for Operation Iraqi Freedom," Thomas added.

Davidson passed on some lessons learned from this deployment to her incoming replacement.

"Trust your people," she said. "They know their mission, and they'll stay focused."

Davidson added that if it weren't for her Soldiers, the mission would not have been a success.

"I can't begin to say how proud of [my Soldiers] I am," Davidson said.



Photo by Pfc. Abel Tre

Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky E. Knox, 49th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control) command sergeant major, cases the battalion's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony here.

"It's all about my Soldiers, I'm honored and humbled to be their commander," Davidson added

Thomas thanked the outgoing unit and its Soldiers for their sacrifice, dedication and hard work.

The 484th Trans. Bn. is headquartered in Phoenix, Ariz., and mobilized through Fort Lewis, Wash. "The training and preparation and everything we've gotten from the 49th has been fantastic," Thomas said.

Water treatment plant expands Iraqi services

By Pfc. Abel Trevino Staff writer

Operation Anaconda Neighborhood continued to make life better for Iraqis living near LSA Anaconda when the Albu Bali water treatment plant was opened for service to the local village

A demonstration of the need for fresh, clean water in the area occurred minutes after the official grand opening of the facility: a local national towing a water tank on the back of a tractor pulled up to fill it with clean water.

To demonstrate his faith in the water treatment plant, Maj. Chuck Larson, 372nd Engineering Group, stepped forward and took the first drink of clear water from the facility.

"It's good," Larson commented to Soldiers, Marines, and local nationals present. "It's really good."

Until now, people in the village of Albu Bali had been drinking the brown water of the Tigris directly from the river and using the same impure source to cook and clean with, said Ismail Khaleem, the owner of the land the facility is housed on.

"It took us three months of actual work [to build the plant], but more time than that because there was a problem with the owner of the land about where to put in the (water pipeline)," said Khalid Abdul-Nabi, the contractor for the facility.

The Marine Corps' Bridge Company,

8th Engineer Support Battalion solved the problem.

"[American military forces] played a key role by helping dig a trench to run the new pipe to the water [source]," said Capt. Dean Stouffer, Bridge Co., 8th Eng. Supt. Bn.

The completion of the facility brings cleaner water and a chance at a better life to a local village.

"We appreciate this project because it was a low cost way to deliver quality water to about 300 people," Larson said. "Iraq has the second largest infant mortality rate and we see this [project] as a way to combat that."

The \$36,000 project also gave the Iraqis a chance to help themselves.

"It's rewarding to see this kind of

progress being made, and the Iraqis are helping themselves make the progress," Stouffer said. "All [the work] was done by local nationals."

Stouffer added that additional assistance was lent by Air Force Lt. Col. Pete Ridilla, 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, Detachment 6 commander.

Stouffer said that the project is a goodwill gesture to those outside of the post, reminding the local nationals that Coalition Forces are doing their best to assist the fledgling nation.

"This project was for the [local nationals], not for [anyone else]," Abdul-Nabi said. "The [Iraqi workers] gave us their extreme efforts (making this come together), and we thank them for it."

Cooks pit skills in heated competition

By Sgt. Ann Venturato Assistant editor

The staffs of all four dining facilities faced off in a spirited competition of uniquely themed holiday cooking and decorating, providing Thanksgiving diners with festive displays, elaborate ice sculptures, intricate vegetable carvings and a meal that mimicked Mom's holiday spread.

In addition to competing for best dining facility, individual items were awarded medals, said Sgt. 1st. Class Ronnie Haith, food service NCO, 13th Corps Support Command.

"I think all the dining facilities are winners because they all did an outstanding job on the work they did. Not only on the displays but also on preparing the food," Haith said.

The dining facilities were judged on three different categories: display and dining area appearance, serving line and menu and food service personnel. They received points for such things as theme, decorations, bread and cake displays, ice carvings and dining table decorations. Six judges evaluated the dining facilities, said Sgt. Maj. L'Tanya Williams, food service sergeant major, 13th COSCOM.

"The detail in the displays was excellent," Haith said, who was one of the judges.

Haith added that the dining facilities did a lot of work when it came to the detail and originality of their displays.

When it came down to picking the winner, it was the extent of that detail that made the difference.

"It was hard work judging all of them," Williams said.

Williams said that it was close between all of them, because they all did an outstanding job.

After weeks of planning, more than 500 military and KBR contracted food service employees ensured Anaconda's dining facilities were as visually stunning as the food was tasty.

"It was a real team effort between the KBR and military personnel working together in the dining facility," Williams said

When it came to who was the top turkey this year, Dining Facility 3 came away with the trophy.

Soldiers would be amazed as far as the amount of man power, time and dedication that went into getting everything ready, said Staff Sgt. Jerry Bidel, 63rd Ordnance Company, a Soldier at DFAC 3.

"It was a lot of team work. There was a lot of long hours," said Sgt. 1st Class Trinidad Rodriguez, NCOIC at DFAC 3.

"We started on the final decorations around Nov. 8," said Spc. Ronald Meyers, 277th Engineer Company, a cook at DFAC

Eric Kalister, KBR Executive Chef at DFAC 3 said the displays took the longest planning and preparation. He said the house took two weeks and the teepees took two days to build.

The diners were ultimately the winners after all the hard work the staff put into preparing the dining facilities.

The displays help raise morale during holidays to know that people are actually looking out for the Soldiers and just trying to bring the holiday spirit to them, Bidel said. Winning the prize for best dining facility was great, but the ultimate prize was the satisfaction on the Soldiers' faces coming through and seeing things done, Bidel added



hoto by Sgt. Ann Ventura

Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers, 13th Corps Support Command commanding general, presents the first place trophy to Freddy Breedlove, a KBR employee at DFAC 3, Nov. 25.

Customs agents inspect containers for redeployment

By Pfc. Abel Trevino Staff writer

Units redeploying to their home station, whether in the United States or elsewhere, need to be aware of customs procedures and protocols when packing their equipment and personal items to leave.

The 887th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron acts as the customs supervisors at LSA Anaconda. They check all gear and CONEXes and MILVANs before they are loaded and secure them afterwards to ensure that no illegal items are loaded onto them after the inspection is completed.

"We put a seal on [the containers] with a packing list on the inside and outside," said Senior Airman Gregory Livergood, 887th ESFS. "If the seal is busted [the packing lists] become null and void and everything [inside] has to be taken out and reinspected."

The inspection, and possible reinspection, process can potentially take hours, while the security forces personnel thoroughly search the containers.

"We look through everything," Livergood said. "Anything that has a compartment or pockets gets searched."

Their inspection is aimed at finding specific items, such as pornography, contraband, aerosol cans, war trophies, animals – living or dead – and other items considered hazardous or dangerous in the United States, Livergood said.

The most commonly found items are ammunition and brass shells, frequently forgotten about when Soldiers return from outside the wire. These items are simply taken and placed in an amnesty box back at the security forces headquarters, Livergood said.

"If we don't know what to do with an item, we call our chain of command," said Senior Airman Jamaal Smalls, 887th ESFS. "They'll advise us what to do with it."

The inspection and repacking is a time-consuming process. Livergood recommends having everything laid out and ready to be inspected when the customs representatives get there.

"The entire process can take two or three weeks," said Sgt. Kevin Newell, 49th Transportation Battalion, a unit inspected by the customs agents recently as they prepare to redeploy. "You have to identify what you can ship out

now and what can go where. Once you've identified that you need to pack your [container] and test the load."

To test the load, units need to put everything they plan on shipping in the containers to verify that it will fit and generate a packing plan.

"You have to have patience and understanding, and you have to have teamwork," Newell said. "You really have to be able to picture in your mind how it's all going to fit together."

Newell also advised units to use CONEX inserts to help manage space and to pack everything in boxes, if possible. Newell's unit is leaving soon and, while more than happy to return to their home station, they were also extremely satisfied with the customs inspectors.

"Customs has been great," Newell said. "Everybody we've dealt with has been great. They feel they really are here to help you."

The customs inspectors find satisfaction in their job and are happy that their customers are not offended, but are welcoming to them, Livergood said.

Redeploying units can contact the 887th ESFS at 458-2253 for more information regarding scheduling and planning for an inspection.

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In absence of family, battle buddies brighten up holidays

By Spc. Leah R. Burton Staff writer

Family time, especially during the holidays is priceless. Although I, along with the several thousand service members and civilians here, won't be celebrating with family, I have my memories of past holidays to keep me company.

If I close my eyes, I can imagine what this year's holiday would be like. My mother would take my two oldest nephews, Marcus and William, to dinner at my grandparents' house. My sister, Allison, and I would show up with my youngest nephew, Tristan.

Echoes of "Hi, Mommy," and "Miss Auntie's here," would greet us as we entered the front door.

Like Theseus in the Labyrinth, we would gingerly weave our way through the family sitting cross-legged on the floor of Grandma's living room. At the end of the maze, we would find the kitchen, practically buried in roasted turkey, deep-fried turkey, ham, greens, yams, cornbread dressing, yeast rolls, homemade cranberry sauce, macaroni and cheese and gravy.

Between yelling at the little ones to stop playing on the basement stairs and sneaking peeks at all the desserts, we would carry the hot dishes downstairs to the makeshift dining room.

The basement is the only place in the house big enough for the whole family, but the men would still seclude themselves upstairs in front of which ever football game was on.

If I were there, I would have to divide my time among family members. Granddad would want to regale me with old Navy stories, while my sister and I exchange the "here it comes again" look. Uncle Merlin, a retired sergeant major in the Reserves, would want to once again try to convince me to look into warrant officer school. Grandmother (that's what we call my great-grandmother) wouldn't say much of anything, but when she did speak, she'd say something deep and profound.

My little cousin D.J. would spend the whole night trying to run from Tristan, because they're about as different in size and stature as a horse jockey and a linebacker. Tristan seems to love tackling poor D.J., so before the night is over, someone would be crying.

Like I said, family time is priceless. Deployment, however, really puts the concept of family into perspective.

In the Army, we form our own close-knit family, especially in the absence of our biological families. We are in the same boat here in that we will be spending our holiday reminiscing and imagining what's happening at home, wherever home may be. Some may even busy themselves with work to avoid such memories that can very often cause emotions to overflow.

In this shared circumstance in which we all find ourselves for the time being, there's something special about celebrating with a group of people who have vowed to give their lives for one another. We have a bond that even the closest family would be hard pressed to duplicate. We take care of one another, through bad and good, and here we seem to have plenty of one and not so much of the other.

Even so, whether I come bearing good news or bad, I know my battle buddies will listen, give advice if I need it or even let me cry on their shoulders. Some of us even fight like brothers and sisters, but that only speaks to how strongly we are connected, because five minutes later, we laugh about whatever it was we were fighting about.

And while living together and working together and seeing each other practically non-stop for 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes — however you want to calculate it — let's

face it, we get downright sick of one another. Just like family.

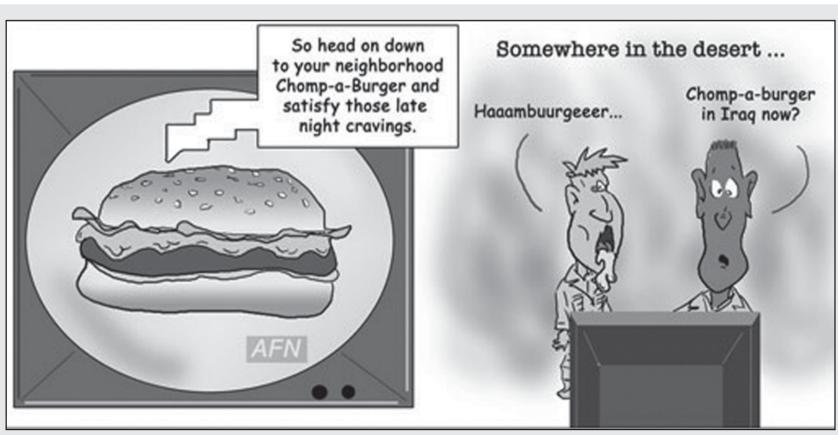
Despite the irritability that sometimes plagues my unit and others in the same situation, short of my biological family, I couldn't ask for a better adopted family with which to spend the holidays.

My parents blessed me with a family that I am proud to fight for. The Army blessed me with a family that I am proud to fight with. Both are truly priceless.





By Aaron Thacker send e-mail to: aaron.thacker@armyofme.us





Left Shoulder Diary

101st Airborne Division

Compiled from Unit History

The shoulder sleeve insignia of the 101st Airborne Division, known as the "Screaming Eagle" is characterized with a shield and the head of a bald eagle. A black and yellow airborne tab is attached above the insignia.

The design comes from Civil War traditions in the State of Wisconsin. The state was the territory of the original 101st Division. The black shield recalls the old "Iron Brigade" one of whose regiments possessed "Old Abe," the famous war eagle.

The insignia was originally approved for the 101st Div. May 23, 1923.

The division provides forcible entry operation using air assault. It is capable of inserting a 4,000 Soldier combined arms task force, 150 kilometers into enemy territory in one lift, and having 281 helicopters, including three battalions of Apache attack helicopters, this division is among the most versatile in the Army.

The 101st Abn. Div. stands as the world's only air assault division.

The 101st Abn. Div. came to be Aug. 28, 1942. It was redesignated 101st Air Cavalry Division Aug. 5, 1968, and went back to the 101st Abn. Div. Sept. 10. 1968.

The 101st Abn. Div. dropped 6,700 Soldiers behind to disrupt to Germans before the massive allied assault of Normandy.

On Dec. 17, 1944, more than 12,000, 101st Abn. Div. Soldiers were sent south to fight in what would be known as the Battle of the Bulge.

During Vietnam, the division fought in both the Tet Offensive and the Tet Counter Offensive. The 101st Abn. Div. was the last combat division to leave Vietnam in 1972.

One of the first units to deploy to Saudi Arabia after Iraq invaded Kuwait in Aug. 1990, the 101st Abn. Div. fired the first shots of Desert Storm by taking out Iraqi radar sites on Jan. 17, 1991.

The 372nd Transportation Company, an element of the 101st Abn. Div., just arrived at here and will work at the Corps Distribution Center.

Civilian of the Week

Rodney Washington, from Prescot, Arkansas, has been working in Iraq and Kuwait for the past two years. Recently, the KBR civilian took over as a morale, welfare and recreation coordinator for LSA Anaconda.

The job entails making schedules, running events and supervising the 28 people who work at the MWR facility.

"I like running a recreation center," he said. "To see the joy it brings to a Soldier, who's been through so much, is incredible."

Washington said this gives Soldiers a way to relax and feel closer to home

Being able to help even in a small way makes Washington feel like he accomplished something.

"It does my heart good to hear a Soldier tell me, 'thank you for making a difference,'" Washington said.

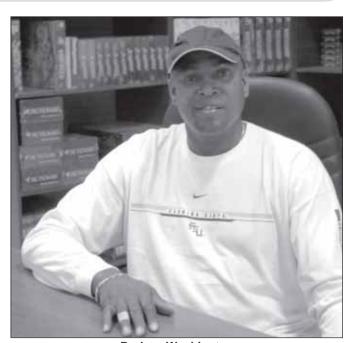
Washington was never in the military.

He took the job of coming out here because he likes trying different things, and he thought this would be a great experience.

"I like to do things, to experiment," Washington said. "Coming out here was definitely my biggest experiment."

Washington has 17 years of experience as an accountant. He also spent seven years running his own janitorial company.

Washington said he has enjoyed his time and hopes to stay working in Iraq for at least three to



Rodney Washington

five more years.

Even though Washington misses his family back home, he's had the chance to do things and go places he never thought he would have had the chance to

"This is kind of a spiritual thing for me," Washington said. "To come to a holy land and walk on the same land that Jesus did is really intriguing."



Photo by Spc. Steven J. Schneid

Elvis

A singer with the Army Materiel Command Band impersonates Elvis Tuesday at Dining Facility 1. The AMC Band played two shows for the troops.

Post upgrades Soldiers' standard of living

By Spc. Leah R. Burton Staff writer

With several Soldiers still living in tents and several thousand more Soldiers due to arrive here with the upcoming transfers of authority, the shortage of housing has become an increasing

After trying other options, such as the single trailers that are sprinkled around post, command officials came up with the idea to acquire some stackable living

After the long and tedious process, the Joint Acquisitions Review Board in Baghdad approved \$15.4 million to purchase 600 stackable living containers.

An Iragi contractor won the bid, saving the Army \$800,000.

"We've actually got more for our money, quality-wise, and they're fully furnished," said Maj. John Rivard, assistant chief of contracting here.

The units come complete with beds, mattresses, pillows, linen, night stands, lamps and wardrobes.

Each unit has two rooms that can house between one and three Soldiers, depending on rank.

Additionally, the units can be stacked up to three high.

Currently, the stackables are only stacked two high, so as not to interfere with Air Force air space. Due to the units' capacity to hold the weight of another trailer, Rivard is looking into getting overhead concrete ballistic shields, which are the weight of another trailer and will provide the trailers with additional overhead cover.

"We're going to have 14 foot concrete walls around them, so as far as safety's concerned, these are probably the best in the entire area," Rivard said.

With the trailers that are already complete, units will soon be able to move in. The main goal is to get the Soldiers that have been living in tents the longest out of tents and into cleaner, healthier, more comfortable housing, Rivard said.

The health benefits of getting out of tents and into cleaner housing include fewer incidents of sinus and upper respiratory infections, sand fly bites and the medical problems they cause.

"Not one unit can afford to lose one Soldier because of a medical issue. That's got to stop, and it's got to stop immediately," Rivard said.

The single trailers that are already here are slated to last two years and require a great deal of maintenance.

"In two years of use, you're looking at structural problems, dry-rotting of the wood between the walls and electrical problems," Rivard said.

In comparison, the stackables are scheduled to last between five and seven years and require no maintenance. They are better insulated with thermal pane windows that will save money on heating and cooling and the amount of stress to the already fragile power system here.

The contractor was scheduled to have the initial order of trailers complete by

They have been completed almost two months early and therefore will be able to absorb a large number of the Soldiers that will be arriving here.

"I can double the capacity for the same area," Rivard said. "We're trying to save money and get the maximum use out of the limited space within our



Photo by Spc. Leah R. Burton

A local national worker fills in the space between the stackable trailers with gravel. The trailers will help absorb a great deal of the incoming personnel that will soon be assigned here.

Space heaters authorized with safety precautions

By Spc. Leah R. Burton Staff writer

As Iraq heads toward the winter months, and the weather cools down significantly, Soldiers are more inclined to resort to the use of space heaters in their

While electric space heaters are authorized, there are some important safety guidelines to follow to prevent electrical overload and fires.

Their use should be monitored to ensure that the following fire prevention guidance is followed.

All heaters need to be listed by an independent testing company, such as Underwriters Laboratory

Heaters will be in good condition, with no frayed cords or wires, have a readable, functional on and off switch, functional tip-over switch and all heat guards in place. Do not attempt to repair electrical wires and

Never leave the heater on in an unoccupied area.

Heaters will be unplugged at night or when not in use. If the heater trips a circuit breaker switch more then

once, there is a problem, and the heater should not be used until it is corrected.

Heaters need proper air circulation and to be located at least 18 inches from combustible materials, such as paper, boxes and clothing.

Position heaters and cords so they will not present a tripping hazard.

Organization fire marshals and supervisors need to know which personnel are using heaters, so they can properly monitor heater use and ensure everyone's safety.

Individuals and supervisors will ensure that all heaters are unplugged when unattended.

Electric space heaters will not be used in damp or

"All it takes is one heater, used improperly, to cause a fire or burn your living area or workplace to the ground. This places everyone at risk; do not become complacent," said Donnie Robinson, 13th Corps Support Command safety officer. "All personnel in your

organization must review these space heater guidelines if they are in use."

Non-electrical heaters, such as un-vented fuel burning heaters are prohibited under any circumstance, due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, toxic gas produced as a by-product of combustion. Carbon Monoxide producing devices include fuel-fired furnaces, fireplaces and woodstoves, gas stoves, vehicles and generators.

Accidental carbon monoxide poisoning kills about 200 Americans a year, and injures about 5,000.

"13th COSCOM cannot tolerate injuries or deaths from carbon monoxide," Robinson said. "All units will inventory, inspect and order as necessary vented heating systems for all sleeping and working areas.'

In addition, individuals should have a functional fire extinguisher, know its location and have clearly marked, accessible fire exits.

By following these guidelines, all LSA Anaconda residents can enjoy safe living and working areas and avoid non-combat injuries and damage to equipment.

Harvey sworn in as new Secretary of Army

DoD press release Army News Service

Dr. Francis J. Harvey was sworn in Nov. 19, at the Pentagon as the 19th Secretary of the Army.

"This is a great honor for me," Harvey said. "My top priority will be to serve our Soldiers, civilian employees and family members of the active component, Army Reserve and Army National Guard. I look forward to working with the secretary of Defense, the Army chief of staff, Gen. Pete Schoomaker; and the Army senior leadership as we fight the Global War on Terrorism while continuing to transform the force."

The Senate confirmed President Bush's nomination of Harvey Nov. 16.

"It's great to have Dr. Harvey on board as our Secretary," said Schoomaker. "Dr. Harvey has a wealth of experience leading large organizations with diverse work forces, managing major programs and leading technology development. His education and industry experience will serve us well as he leads our Army in this window of strategic opportunity."

As Secretary of the Army, Harvey has statutory responsibility for all matters relating to Army manpower, personnel, reserve affairs, installations, environmental issues, weapons systems and equipment acquisition, communications, and financial management.

Harvey is responsible for the department's annual budget of \$98.5 billion. He leads a work force of over one million active duty, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve Soldiers, 220,000 civilian employees, thousands of contractors, and has stewardship over 15 million acres of land

Prior to his appointment, Harvey was a business executive with broad experience centered on the defense industry. He held various professional, management and executive positions within the Westinghouse Corporation from 1969 to

1997, including president of the Electronics Systems Group, president of the Government and Environmental Services Company, and chief operating officer of the \$6 billion Industries and Technology Group.

Most recently, Harvey was a director and vice chairman of Duratek, a company specializing in treating radioactive, hazardous, and other wastes. In his career, he has been involved in one or more phases of more than 20 major Department of Defense programs.

Harvey earned his doctorate in Metallurgy and Material Sciences from the University of Pennsylvania and his Bachelor of Science at the University of Notre Dame in Metallurgy Engineering and Material Science. He was a White House Fellow at the Department of Defense in the late

Harvey succeeds Les Brownlee, who served as the acting Secretary of the Army for the past 18 months.

"I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Secretary Les



Photo by Staff Sgt. Carmen L. Burge

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld looks on while Raymond DuBois, director of administration and management, swears in Dr. Francis J. Harvey as the 19th Secretary of the Army Nov. 19.

Brownlee for his leadership and stewardship of the Army over the past 18 months," Schoomaker said. "His tireless efforts to build a campaign-quality Army, to equip our Soldiers with the best equipment will have an impact on the Army and ensure we remain relevant and ready."

Afghanistan-based Airmen revive adopt-a-village program

By Staff Sgt. Jennifer Lindsey Air Force News Service

Afghan children and adults swarmed Airmen bearing gifts recently, marking the revival of Bagram Air Base's adopt-a-village program.

To create more room for the almost daily arrival of clothing, toy and school supply donations from people worldwide, the program restarted with three distribution missions in two days. With eight pickup trucks loaded with goods, Airmen convoyed to the mountain villages of Kharoti and Dorani, and to the town of Jangadam on the first day, and to the nearby town of Hasankheyl on the second day.

Donations included 50 bags of clothing, a pallet of drinking water, 40 personal hygiene kits, 25 blankets, and enough notebooks, pencils, pens, crayons, glue and teddy bears for more than 100 children.

The give-away seemed chaotic to many of the Airmen handing out the items, but the excitement was understandable. Ramadan, a time of personal denial and spiritual reflection, had just concluded the previous week.

In addition, people here cannot simply drive to the local store for new shoes, pain reliever or pencils. The nearest shopping area is more than an 8-mile hike through a rocky, dry and barren desert. Also, many of the people do not have the money for such "luxuries," officials said.

"It was a culture shock for me to see the way people here live," said Senior Airman April Siler, a supply technician assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron. She is deployed from Pope Air Force Base, N.C. "Sure, the men and children were out there for the things we brought them, but if it were the other way around, I would be too. It felt good to be able to share the things we could."

For more than a year and a half, deployed troops have distributed food and clothing, and medical technicians have provided locals with field treatment through the program.

Deliveries were put on hold through the summer and



Photo by Staff Sat Jennifer Lindsey

Senior Airman Jason Weiss lightly rubs behind a villager's ears to see if the man experiences discomfort, which is one of the common symptoms of a sinus infection.

early autumn, as force-protection issues increased before Afghanistan's presidential election Oct. 9.

Although the visits may be done with good will in mind, traveling "outside the wire" does not happen on a whim; the visits are well-planned operations.

Office of Special Investigations agents work closely with village elders and local Afghan militia forces commanders to ensure U.S. troops' safety. Besides developing a detailed mission plan that includes security forces posting guard, the agents request that the villagers also provide security during the visit.

"It was a little uncomfortable to see men walking around with AK-47s, but it was an incredible experience," said Staff Sgt. Christy Sullivan, NCOIC of services for the 455th Expeditionary Support Squadron. She is deployed from Travis Air Force Base, Calif. "I got exactly what I volunteered for, to see children's smiling faces and to help little kids here feel good for a while."

Some deployed Airmen have forgone personal Christmas gifts, opting for the gift of giving instead. Adults in Lt. Col. Daniel Hawkins' family residing throughout the United States are investing the money that would have been spent on goodies for each other to purchase school

supplies and toys for local children.

The first three boxes of supplies arrived just before the program's revival, and the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group deputy commander handed out puzzles and games to Hasankheyl children.

The benefits of the program are mutual, officials said. It offers a venue for Americans to interact with local Afghans.

It also goes hand-in-hand with the overall mission here—to help rebuild the nation and to establish peace and stability throughout the region, said Master Sgt. Robert Nolen, a patrol master assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. He is deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

While Airmen handed out toys and supplies to children, Senior Airman Jason Weiss worked at helping ailing villagers. In three hours, the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group medical technician evaluated and provided field treatment for more than 60 men and children with the assistance of an interpreter.

The most common ailments were flank and abdominal pain, and gastritis, all the result of unsanitary living conditions, said the Airman deployed from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

"My goal is the same as the overall military goal here: Leave it better than we found it," he said. "I offer pain medication and antibiotics, but it's a temporary fix because their drinking water will simply reinfect them."

The Airmen said they hope that the recent successful Afghan presidential elections will help the nation to continue to move forward in quality-of-life improvements including the rebuilding of clean wells, safe roads, hospitals and schools.

Until then, programs such as this will continue their outreach to provide whatever relief they can to the local people.

"Unfortunately, (they are) in need of everything," said OSI Agent "Kevin," deployed from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, "but if I had to pick a few things, it would be over-the-counter medications, clothes, notebooks, pens and paper."

Around the Services

Marines in Fallujah celebrate 229th birthday

By Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook Marine Corps News Service

As Marines sat on cinder blocks and sandbags overlooking the battle-ridden city of Fallujah during Operation Al Fajr, an Amtrak drove past blaring the "Marines' Hymn" from their loud speakers.

They couldn't stand at attention, but that still didn't stop them from humming along or mouthing the words, showing respect for those who fought throughout our nation's history.

On Nov. 10, Marines around the world broke out their dress blues and cut a piece of cake for the oldest and youngest Marine present; however Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment celebrated their 229th birthday in desert cammies on the streets and rooftops of Fallujah fighting insurgents.

"When the 10th rolled around, I knew it was the Marine Corps birthday, but out here it was just another day of patrols and clearing houses," said 1st Lt. Travis Fuller, 3rd platoon commander.

"When I was at the ball last year, I felt bad that I had that luxury while other Marines were over here in Iraq. This year the roles are just reversed," Fuller said.

Some Marines had a hard time recalling how much time had passed since they left Camp Fallujah, but a few held other items which were committed to memory that told them when to wish their comrades a happy birthday.

"I knew when it was the 10th because my girlfriend's is on the fourth and my dad's is on the eighth," said Lance Cpl. Jonah Harper, a mortarman attached to 3rd platoon.

"Being over here on the Marine Corps birthday and freeing the city of Fallujah from insurgents means a lot to me," Harper said. "Dancing, throwing on the dress blues, having a few drinks; none of that seems important anymore."

From their guard posts and fighting positions, some Marines still made the most of their situation continuing the traditions performed at each ceremony.

"When I look back on this Marine Corps birthday, I'll remember taking five minutes on the roof of our defensive position and making a toast to the Marines around me with a Pepsi I snagged from one of the resupply convoys," Fuller said.

From the American Revolution to Operation Iraqi Freedom II, Marines continue to celebrate their heritage under fire.

"We join the ranks of the Marines who celebrated their birthday in combat during all of the past wars," said Cpl. Dave Willis, 3rd platoon 3rd squad leader. "This is a Marine Corps birthday none of us will ever forget."

Before heading out for Operation Al

Fajr, the Marines of 3rd platoon gathered around their platoon sergeant as he read this year's birthday message by Gen. Michael W. Hagee, the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

His birthday message includes the following paragraphs:

"The current battlefields of the global war on terror are linked to the storied campaigns of our past by an unbroken tradition of proud and loyal service. At New Providence, Chapultepec, Belleau Wood, Tarawa, Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, Con Thien, Kuwait, and now in places like Fallujah, Marines have consistently demonstrated a dedication to duty, a commitment to warfighting excellence, and a devotion to each other that has instilled a fierce determination to overcome seemingly impossible challenges. Our warrior ethos is and will continue to be the Corps' hallmark

Marines, as we celebrate with friends and families the founding of our beloved Corps, you should take pride in our long history of distinguished service to this great nation and its citizens. I ask you to remember especially the sacrifices of our fallen and wounded comrades.

Finally, rededicate yourselves to taking care of one another and ensuring we remain the finest warfighting organization in the world. Happy Birthday Marines, Semper Fidelis, and keep attacking!"

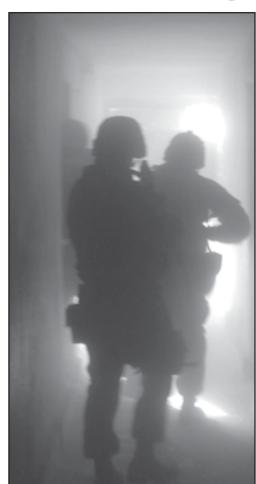


Photo by Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook

Marines with the 3rd Platoon Company C, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment run down a smoking hallway, clearing a building that was a suspected insurgent stronghold.

Military couples renew vows, win honeymoon cruise

By Sgt. 1st Class Tammy M. Jarrett Army News Service

Eighteen military couples renewed their wedding vows live during Good Morning America's "Just Married...Again" morning show extravaganza at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City Nov. 18.

In all, 125 couples participated in the vow renewal special, which was sponsored by GMA, Brides Magazine and Norwegian Cruise Line.

In addition to renewing their vows live in a multi-denominational ceremony, and having a reception with a giant wedding cake created with 275 cupcakes, the couples were serenaded by Grammy Award-Winning singer Michael Bolton.

However, the biggest surprise of the morning came when the cast of GMA and Norwegian Cruise Line announced that all 125 couples won a second honeymoon trip on the romantic cruise line. The couples will spend 11 days cruising through the Caribbean to exotic locales like Antigua and Tortola.

"I was speechless because we didn't expected all of this [trip to New York City and hotel accommodations], said Chief Warrant Officer Hector Echevarria, who renewed his vows with his wife, Rebecca, of 12 years. "We didn't think we would get the cruise, that was a total surprise," said the Black Hawk pilot with Company B, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation, Fort Stewart, Ga., his eyes lightening up as he talked about winning the cruise.

"We were so elated, we just started jumping up and down because we couldn't believe it," Rebecca added, the



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tammy Jar

Rev. Jimmy A. Thomas of the Wesley Union AME Zion Church in Harrisburg, Pa., Rev. Forrest Church of the All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City and Rabbi Jamie Korngold of Boulder, Colo., lead the couples in renewing their vows in the Hammerstein Ballroom Nov. 18.

excitement still in her voice.

For Marsha D'arton, it was tears of joy even though she had her suspicions.

"My mom mentioned that she thought everyone was going to go so we had a feeling, but we were still quite surprised," said Marsha, wife of Staff Sgt. Joseph C. D'arton, with the New York Recruiting Command. "I

started crying. I was very excited and at a loss for words.'

"I had to contain myself," said Sgt. 1st Class Mark Fitzgerald when he heard the announcement. He said his wife, Cindy, of 24 years told him she had a feeling, but this was the one time he remained skeptical. "We have never had a honeymoon; never been anywhere by ourselves. It's kind of a honeymoon extreme makeover."

DECEMBER 5, 2004 ANACONDA TIMES DECEMBER 5, 2004

Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers, 13th Corps Support Command commanding general, views the ice sculpture at one of the dining facilities Nov. 25.

Soldiers, civilians come dine at table of plenty

Harris, 2nd Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, while

Although it wasn't a home-cooked meal, dining

weeks to add a home-like feel to the dining facilities for

The dining facility staffs were up late Wednesday

night working on the final touches on the decorations

as well as cooking all the food. It was a team effort at

deployed throughout the Middle East, said Chuck

Doherty, KBR Theater Project Manager, Food Services.

turkeys, or about 200,000 pounds of turkey, 5,000 hams,

That task involved bringing in 20,000 whole roasting

45,000 pounds of stuffing, 50,000 pounds of mashed potatoes, 25,000 pounds of cranberry sauce, 8,750

KBR Food Services had the daunting task of provid-

facility personnel worked hard during the last few

waiting in line to get into one of the facilities.

all who were away from their families.

By Sgt. Ann Venturato Assistant editor

While more than 23,000 troops and civilians at LSA Anaconda, Iraq, were not home for the holiday, they still feasted on a dazzling array of Thanksgiving favorites with all the trimmings.

Lines flowed out the doors as more than 15,000 Soldiers and civilians crammed into the facilities, waiting for their chance to try some turkey, mashed potatoes or pumpkin pie.

"I'm going to get some dressing, ham, turkey and all the stuff that's like home cooking," said Spc. Charles

all the dining facilities as service members and civilians came together to make the places festive. ing Thanksgiving dinners to more than 170,000 troops

> gallons of eggnog and 73,750 pies. The various dining facilities were decorated in traditional theme of turkeys, cornucopia, and iced

Displays ranged from an impressive collection of edible sculptures including a holiday scene made of marzipan, breadsticks, icing and oregano to a scene of the first Thanksgiving with pilgrims, an abundance of fruit and a cake in the shape of a book.

Relaxing music played in the background while Soldiers enjoyed the feast prepared for them at another dining facility.

There was also a "fallen Soldier" display for Soldiers to reflect upon – reminding them of comrades no

"I think they did a good job here," said Staff Sgt. Tausha Anderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Corps Support Command, after admiring all the decorations.

Once inside, Soldiers smiled and chatted with first sergeants, sergeants major and officers serving the day's meal. Leaders serving Soldiers is a long held

tradition on special holidays. Some troops met with Gen. George W. Casey, Multi-National Forces-Iraq commander, when he stopped by one of the dining facilities and greeted service members eating there.

"We look forward to meals like this a lot," Harris said after filling his plate. "We're very fortunate to be here for Thanksgiving and not out chasing the bad

Service members said they were excited to sit down and enjoy a good Thanksgiving meal with friends.

"I wish I could be at home with my family, but I am glad to be with my buddies this Thanksgiving," said Staff Sgt. Tom Vande Burgt, 3664th Maintenance

For the dining facility staff, the reward was in the proliferation of smiles on the Soldiers' faces as they admired all the work that went into making the day

"I am satisfied to see Soldiers enjoying everything," said Andre Ingram, KBR Dining Facility manager for DFAC 2.



The dining facilities spent days planning and preparing the



various displays so they went with their theme.



Food service personnel use a variety of items such as this watermelon to create some festive Thanksgiving Day displays for all who came to dine Nov. 25. Both military and civilian workers teamed together to make it a success.



A food service worker in the dining facility picks up a tray of pies to bring out to Soldiers and civilians dⁱning at one of the dining facilities Nov. 25.



Spc. Jennifer Monroe, a cook at DFAC 2, prepares a truffle display Nov. 25.



A food service worker in the dining facility slices up roast beef for the Thanksgiving Day feast.



Soldiers line up outside DFAC 1 Thanksgiving Day.

Master Sgt. Leo Bray, 172nd Corps Support Group, finishes his Thanksgiving dinner with a slice of pie.

Movie Schedule

Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Daily Shows: 3 p.m., 6 p.m., and 9 p.m. (schedule is subject to change)

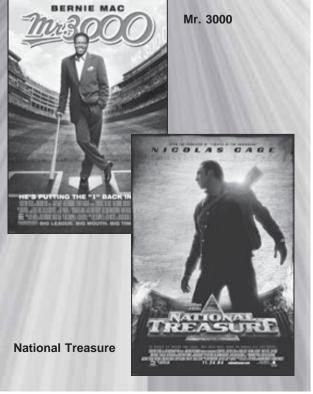
	Dec. 5
3 p.m.	Mr. 3000
6 p.m.	Cellular
9 p.m.	National Treasure
	Dec. 6
3 p.m.	Sky Captain
6 p.m.	Wimbledon
9 p.m.	Alien vs. Predator
	Dec. 7
3 p.m.	The Manchurian Candidate
6 p.m.	SpongeBob SquarePants
9 p.m.	National Treasure

Dec. 8
3 p.m. Wimbledon
6 p.m. Suspect Zero
9 p.m. Collateral

Dec. 9
3 p.m. Without A Paddle
6 p.m. SpongeBob SquarePants
9 p.m. National Treasure

Dec. 10
3 p.m. Alexander
6 p.m. Christmas with the Kranks
9 p.m. Alexander

Dec. 11
3 p.m. First Daughter
6 p.m. Raise Your Voice
9 p.m. Alexander



Weekly Religious Schedule

Roman Catholic Mass

Saturday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148) Sunday 8:30 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent Sunday 10:30 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel Sunday 11 a.m. Anaconda Provider Chapel Monday 9 a.m. PPI Dining Facility Monday 9 p.m. PPI Dining Facility Friday 6:30 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel Sacrament of Reconciliation Friday 6 p.m Air Force Hospital Chapel

Church of Christ

Sunday 11 a.m. 1/142nd Chapel Tent

Christian Orthodox

Saturday 7 p.m. 185th Task Force Tent Sunday 11 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent

Protestant-Gospel

Sunday 11 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater Sunday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Lutheran

Sunday 8:30 a.m. Cherokee Chapel (bldg. 4002) Sunday 2 p.m. 185th Task Force Tent

Protestant-Contemporary

Sunday 7 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Protestant-Traditional

Sunday 9 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148) Sunday 9:30 a.m. Anaconda Provider Chapel Sunday 10:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel Sunday 11 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148) Sunday 11 a.m. 185th Aviation Group Chapel

Protestant-Praise and Worship

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater Sunday 9:30 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Islamic Prayer

Friday 1:30 p.m. Anaconda Provider Chapel

Latter Day Saints

Sunday 1 p.m. Anaconda Provider Chapel Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Jewish Prayer

Friday 6:30 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Movie Synopsis for Dec. 5 - 11

National Treasure

PG, Adventure, 130 min Nicolas Cage, Harvey Keitel, Don McManus

A man sets out to steal a lost fortune in order to save it in this adventure drama from producer Jerry Bruckheimer. Benjamin Franklin Gates (Nicolas Cage) is an archeologist who is from the eighth generation of a family who has shared an unusual quest. As Gates-family legend has it, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin hid a massive cache of gold during the waning days of the Revolutionary War and left clues as to its whereabouts in the original drafts of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. With no firm proof that it actually exists, Gates sets out to crack the code that will lead him to the fortune, which, as a member of the Gates clan, he is sworn to protect from wrongdoers.

Mr. 3000

PG, Comedy, 102 min Bernie Mac, Angela Bassett, Brian J. White

Stan Ross, an arrogant and jaded baseball star—who is revered by many, but liked by few—retires from the sport, as soon as he achieves his 3,000th base hit. His goal was to earn his place within the elite group of players, who have achieved that distinction, and he did it—or so he thought. Now, however, after three of those hits have been disqualified, the Hall of Famer is forced to return to the game, and play once again for his former team, the Milwaukee Brewers, in order to re-set his now tarnished record and earn those three hits. The experience renews his love for the sport, and reminds him what it was like at the very beginning of his career, as he finds himself imparting some of this knowledge to an enthusiastic, young rookie.

SpongeBob SquarePants

PG, Comedy, 87 min Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke, Clancy Brown

Something nefarious is afloat in the depths of Bikini Bottom: King Neptune's crown has been stolen, and the prime suspect is Mr. Krabs, proprietor of Mr. Krabs Krabby Patties. Despite evidence to the contrary — not to mention having been turned down for a long-awaited promotion at the restaurant — SpongeBob (voice of Tom Kenny) refuses to believe that his boss is responsible and teams up with his best friend, Patrick (voice of Bill Fagerbakke), on a mission to Shell City, where he hopes he can exonerate Mr. Krabs and return the crown to its rightful owner in the process. Of course, this is no easy task; once outside the relative safety of Bikini Bottom, SpongeBob is faced with the overwhelming dangers of the sea, not the least of which being Plankton and a scheming bottomdweller hell-bent on oceanic domination.

Cellular

PG-13, Thriller, 92 min Seth Green, Matthew Lillard, Dax Shepard

A random wrong number on his cell phone sends a young man into a high-stakes race against time to save a woman's life. With no knowledge of Jessica Martin (Kim Basinger) other than her hushed, panicked voice on the other end of the tenuous cell phone connection, Ryan (Chris Evans) is quickly thrown into a world of deception and murder on his frantic search to find and save her. Jessica's life is in his hands, but what is waiting for him on the other side of the line, and what will cost him to find out? Co-starring Jason Statham ("The Italian Job") and William H. Macy ("Fargo"). The film is directed by David Ellis.

Dual service veteran sees three U.S. conflicts

By Spc. Leah R. Burton Staff writer

In this day and age, it's not unusual for a service member to experience more than one U.S. conflict. Service members who have seen action in Vietnam, Kuwait and Iraq, however, are few and far between.

Born in Chicago, Ill., and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Chief Warrant Officer Bennison Roche of Company B, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation enlisted in the Marine Corps fresh out of Fort Worth's Azle High School in 1967.

"[The Marines'] doctrine of discipline is really really high. That's what I respected most about it," Roche said.

In 1969, Roche found himself and his unit packed up and on their way to Marble Mountain, just west of Danang in Vietnam. He served as a UH-1 Huey helicopter crew chief and mechanic for the duration of his four-year enlistment, and achieved the rank of sergeant.

"In Vietnam, I was so darned young, and it was so long ago. I just remember that I was bulletproof," Roche said. "I could fly eight to ten hours a day, and if they wanted me to do it again, twice in a row, I could do it. I had no fear."

Upon his return from Vietnam, he got out of the Marine Corps and attended the liberal arts program at Florissant Valley Community College in Florissant, Mo. After college, Roche decided he wanted to be a pilot.

"I spent four years in the back as a gunner and mechanic, and I was always thrilled with the thought [of flying] and watching [the pilots] having a good time. I said 'I could do that,'" Roche said, and with that he joined the Army Reserves in 1980 at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

"I had an opportunity to go to flight school, and I didn't have a four-year degree. The Army had the best opportunity for me at that time in my life," Roche said.

In 1990, Roche once again found himself heading off to war, in support of

Operation Desert Storm. He was assigned with 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation in Kuwait City.

"We were there such a short time. We were there about six months. By the time we got activated, deployed and returned, it was all a blur," Roche said. "It wasn't anything like this, because by the time our unit got over there, the war was actually already done. We were doing a lot of support missions, flying general staff around to different locations."

Roche did not encounter any dangerous situations while in Kuwait, not even a rocket or mortar attack.

This grandfather of two found himself deployed once again, Feb. 29, when he arrived at LSA Anaconda. He flies UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters here, transporting passengers back and forth to different locations in country, a job he takes very seriously.

"We're preventing convoys from having to transport all the folks that we transport back and forth. If they'd have to go by convoy, it's a lot more dangerous," Roche said.

The 29-year veteran who grew up with a 35-year Air Force veteran as his father and nine brothers and sisters, six of whom have served in the military, is simply proud to defend the ideals of America.

"We are so fortunate. I've been a lot of places that I know this to be fact. We have so many liberties and the best country in the world. You need to protect those values and those liberties, and if this is what it takes, then you have to do it," Roche said.

His wife, son and grandchildren are used to his dedication to service to his country, but they are still in awe of him.

"My son just can't believe it that I'm doing this again. He just thinks I'm the biggest role model for kids, especially my two little grandsons," Roche said.

Roche plans to stay in the Army for a few more years, then fly for at least five more years in the civilian sector.

"I'm still too young to give up," Roche said.



Roche prepares to start up the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter and depart on an early morning transport mission to Fallujah Nov. 28.



Photos by Spc. Leah R. Bur

U.S., Australia team up to stop rockets

By Capt. Jayson Morgan 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Public Affairs

CAMP AL SAQR (FALCON)— "Stop the rockets!" That's what Lt. Col. Jay Allen said as 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, kicked off Operation Rock Bottom, a three-day multinational force operation to clear its area of insur-

Task Force Mustangs was augmented with the brigade reconnaissance team (BRT) from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, a weapon's company from 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, engineer assets from the division, a ground penetrating radar team comprised of U.S., British, and Australian Soldiers and a company of Iraqi National Guard.

For three days and nights, the task force searched areas where rockets have been fired. They placed a complex obstacle on a road that is known to have heavy weapons trafficking. Every house and farm was searched.

The BRT provided a screen on the flank, as the mortars conducted registration, ensuring their ability to have responsive fires.

The searches netted numerous small arms, 10 detainees, and three rockets. The message from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry was loud and clear: multinational forces will not hesitate to respond to attacks from the south.

The inclusion of Marines demonstrated to insurgents that the perceived "buffer zone" between the Marine Corps and Army's sector is not safe haven for them, Allen said.

More large-scale missions are critical for Baghdad.



Maj. Cameron Leiker coordinates with the ground penetrating radar team during Operation Rock Bottom.

Division medics teach life-saving information



Staff Sgt. Wayne Erb (left) and Sgt. Brett Campbell, both medics in 458th Engineer Battalion, listen carefully with text books open during a pre-hospital trauma life support course. Medics with Task Force Baghdad take the course as a refresher or update on skills.

By Spc. Al Barrus Army News Service

BAGHDAD - "Who here doesn't know what traumatic cardiopulmonary arrest is?" asks the instructor. No hands rise, and the instructor is pleased.

Who does know what it means? A medic does.

Making sure medics know how to recognize and treat (and pronounce) such injuries as penetrating thoracic trauma, and retroperitoneal hemorrhaging is part of the 32-hour Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support class routinely given to Task Force Baghdad medics.

"This course is very vital for pre-hospital care," said Sgt. 1st Class Richshell Lott, an instructor in the division surgeon section. "These people are the first responders to go to an injury or illness. This course gives them the basic skills to properly manage that casualty and refer them to the proper medical facility.

While some of the 12 medics are taking the class as a refresher, it's also a way for old generation medics to get on par with the Army's new combat medic standard, he said.

The course covered some advanced paramedical skills, such as performing different types of resuscitation and learning which intravenous fluids to administer. It primarily focused on identifying injuries, and which medical care level a patient needs to arrive at, Lott said.

The new combat medic military occupational specialty in the Army is designated 91W, and includes pre-hospital trauma life support in initial specialty training. The old generation of medics, formerly known as 91B, are now designated 91W-Y2, Lott said.

"We are looking to drop that Y2 identifier, and making them full-fledged 91Ws," Lott said.

Lott said this course is especially important to medics performing their duties in a combat zone.

"You need to know how to identify life threatening situations wherever you are trying to treat a casualty," he explained. "You need to identify how that person is suffering. You need to be able to manage the [medical] problem. You need to [ensure] they get transported, or call in a (medical evacuation) so [the patient] can get to the proper facility.

Teaching the course is not only a fun experience, but fulfilling on a grander scale, Lott said.

"I like the personal gratification I get when I can see the students understand what we've been teaching them, and they can apply that," he concluded. "They can leave this classroom and feel confident that they can manage any emergency medical situation and make the proper referrals. I like to see that."

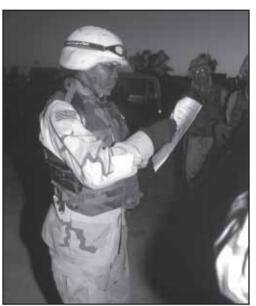
STB officers take a turn manning towers

By Sgt. Ann Venturato Assistant editor

Soldiers from the Special Troops Battalion, 13th Corps Support Command, got a welcome break from tower guard duty Nov. 25, when officers from the unit took over for the day.

Instead of putting on their dress blues and serving Thanksgiving dinner in the dining facility, the officers showed their support and appreciation for their troops by doing what Soldiers do here everyday to keep the post safe.

"I volunteered," said Maj. Willie Rios. "I wanted the Soldiers to understand that we care about them, and because we care about them we wanted to take this day to support them."



1st Sgt. Deborah McDaniels, 21st Replacement Company, one of the CORs for that day checks the tower guard roster again to verify information about what officer has what shift that day.

Like their Soldiers, the officers stood in formation to be inspected by 1st. Sgt. Brenda Wiegert, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th COSCOM and 1st Sgt. Deborah McDaniels, 21st Replacement Company, the two commanders of the relief for that day. The CORs briefed the officers on things to expect and also verified what shift the officer was doing.

"These guys will be pulling four hour shifts. They all volunteered." Wiegert said.

There was such a large response that the officers only had to do one shift, although they were willing to do both shifts, said Capt. Richard Strong, personnel operations officer.

Besides being briefed by their CORs, some of the officers got advice from their Soldiers.

"I asked some of the NCO's what it was like and what to expect because they do this everyday. I am just trying to give them a break. Plus I wanted to experience (being on guard tower duty) before I left," Strong said.

The cold morning weather didn't dim the officers' spirits.

"It should be exciting," said 1st Lt. Dhramen P. Singh, personnel officer, STB, "It just seemed like the right thing to do, because Soldiers have to do this 364 days, [we] might as well do it one day."

The Soldiers themselves were excited for a day off from duty.

"It's good for morale for the enlisted Soldiers to see officers pulling guard,"



Photos by Sgt. Ann Ventur

Above: Capt. Richard Strong adjusts the camel back on the back of 1st Lt. Christopher Spencer, in preparation for guard mount on Thanksgiving Day. Below: Capt. Luisa Bargeron, 424th Quartermaster Company commander, bundles up for the cold weather on Thanksgiving Day.

said Sgt. Daniel Agosto, HHC, 13th COSCOM.

Staff Sgt. Tausha Anderson, HHC, 13th COSCOM, said she thought this was a good opportunity for officers to see what Soldiers have to go through day in and day out while on duty.

Until an officer gets up there in the tower and sees how cold or how hot it is, they can't really know what Soldiers go through, said Singh.

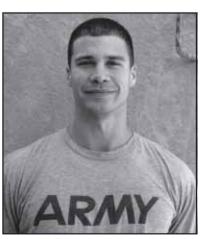
The officers got to experience the rite of passage of guard mount, the cold weather, as well as the seriousness of keeping the post safe.

For these officers, the holiday tradition of saying thanks to the Soldiers now includes guard duty.



Question of the Week

How have the conditions here affected your life?



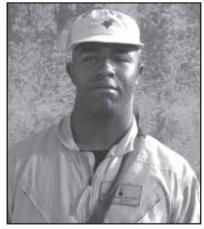
Sgt. Brock Bergman 785th Medical Company Combat Stress Control

"The improvements I'm very impressed with. I relieve a lot of stress by working out with my friends [at the gym]."



Spc. William Schroeder 81st Brigade Combat Team

"More people hang out together now that the facilities are in one location. We get to know more about each other."



Spc. Kendricks Hatchett *1st Battalion, 7th Calvary*

"When I have a day off I'm always happy to come to the new MWR [building]. It gets me away from all the stress."



Staff Sgt. Alex Straub 81st Brigade Combat Team

"The improvements on the facilities make Anaconda seem more like home, and it boosts the morale."



Sgt. Jeremy Hedges *29th Signal Battalion*

"The new improvements definitely cured the boredom."

MWR Complex Schedule

Dominoes Tournament A dominoes tournament will be held at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Chess Tournament Night of champions at 7:30 p.m.

Darts Tournament will be held

A darts tournament will be held at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Wednesday.

Ping Pong Tournament A ping pong tournament will be held at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dec. 14.

Free Throw Contest

A free throw contest will be held at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dec. 15.

9-Ball Tournament

A 9-Ball tournament will be held at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dec 16.

Music

The MWR Sports Lounge features different types of music each night Monday through Saturday 8 p.m. to midnight.

Mondays -- Easy Listening Tuesdays -- Karaoke Wednesdays -- R&B Thursdays -- Country Fridays -- Tejano and Old School Saturdays -- Salsa

LSA Anaconda Fitness Center

Judo

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center offers Judo classes at 8:30 p.m. today, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Aerobics

There will be an aerobics class Monday through Saturday at 6 p.m. every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Karate

Karate classes will be held Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.

Basketball

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center will host basketball league play tonight, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m.

Capoeira

Would you like to dance, do martial arts and work out at the same time? If so, come to Capoeira at the LSA Anaconda Fitness Center Wednesday 7:15 p.m. or Sunday and Thursday, 6 p.m.

8-Ball Tournament

Just Show up and prove you're the best at LSA Anaconda. When: Thursday, 3 p.m., and 8 p.m. Where: MWR



Women's Basketball League starts Dec. 10 at the LSA Anaconda Fitness Center.

For more information contact *Yolanda.Gaddy@Halliburton.com*

Enjoy some country

If you like to dance and you like to dance
Country, join other fans of Country music
Thursday nights,
8 p.m. to midnight at the MWR
Lounge.
Don't forget to bring your dancing shoes.



When: Every Wednesday Where: Balad Town Hall Time: 6:30 p.m.

Contact Tech Sgt. Dennis McJunkin at dennis.mcjunkin@blab.centaf.af.mil or 443-6402 for more information.

"TIP OF THE SPEAR" IN LEADERSHIP, MENTORSHIP
AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

LSA Anaconda hosts its first Turkey Trot



Photos by Spc. Leah R. Burton

A female Soldier pushes out the final stretch on the heels of a fellow runner of the first LSA Anaconda Turkey Trot 5K run Nov 25.

By Spc. Leah R. Burton Staff writer

About 200 service members gathered in front of the LSA Anaconda stadium to participate in the first LSA Anaconda Turkey Trot, a 5K run in celebration of Thanksgiving, Nov. 25.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation sponsored the event that was open to all LSA Anaconda residents in order to increase morale during the holidays.

"We wanted to provide everyone with something to do on such a family oriented holiday," said Justin Hampton, MWR supervisor.

MWR manager Terry Woodruf came up with the idea while he was looking for an activity for the Soldiers that would serve as a healthy, positive distraction from missing the holidays at home.

Individuals who were interested had the option to register early at any major MWR facility starting Nov. 17. Late registration was also available.

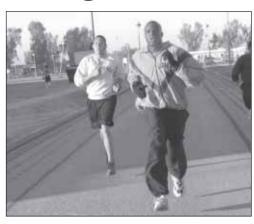
About 330 people signed up for the run, but the morning of the race, about 200 actually showed up and ran.

"It's Turkey Day, and I heard there was a 5K. It was a day break from the missions to celebrate Thanksgiving.

Since I'm not home and able to go deer hunting, I have to do something," said Spc. Isaac Sargent, 724th Transportation Company.

On the brisk morning of the race, Soldiers, Airmen, and civilians congregated around the registration table, stretching and running in place to keep

"It's Thanksgiving, and the Army's running. We always run with the Army, so here we are. Besides, it's fun," said



A Soldier and an Airman sprint out the final stretch of the first LSA Anaconda Turkey Trot.

Maj. Mark Seldes, 332nd Expeditionary Aeromedical Squadron.

To pull this event off, the MWR staff had to coordinate with the dining facilities to get juice for the runners, with the military police, the Air Force's security forces and the medics to ensure the safety of all who participated.

On a holiday meant for families to get together and celebrate all for which they are thankful, 200 members of the LSA Anaconda family, from different places, from different services and from different age groups assembled to pound the pavement in honor of Thanksgiving.

"It was just a nice way to break up the monotony, to get out here and run with the guys," said Ryan Fick, a civilian with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

The top three male finishers were Isaac Sargent, 18 minutes, 56 seconds, Donald Beaulieu, 18:57, and Michael Baka. 19:12.

The top three female finishers were Jenny George, 22:51, Dawn Hanson, 23:22, and Maria Johnson, 23:23.

Soldiers compete against each other, themselves

By Steven J. Schneider Staff writer

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center played host to a fitness competition featuring the bench press, pull-ups and push-ups Monday.

The competition, although loosely organized, provided Soldiers with the opportunity to show off their physical skills, and according to Rodney Kearney, 737th Transportation Company, helps motivate Soldiers to work out.

Kearney did more than 110 push-ups. "It makes you want to work out harder, so you can do well when you compete," he said.

Steven Johnson competed in the bench press for the third time this year.

After winning the first two competitions, he came in second, even though, he posted a personal best of 405 lbs.

Ken Sims, 4th Corps Material Management Center, pushed up 425 lbs., only 50 pounds less than his personal best, to take home the championship.

Johnson said he was just happy to come out and basically compete against himself. He was ecstatic after his final lift.

"I don't view this as a loss," Johnson said. "It's just a game. It's all about coming out here to do more than I've done before."

Johnson said these competitions are definitely about pushing himself to the limit and about personal fitness not the glory of victory.

This competition was just a warm up for what's to come.

The staff of the Fitness Center is planning a strong man competition with different weight classes and five different events for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.



Photo by Spc. Steven J. Schne

Steven Johnson pushes up his all time best bench press of 405 lbs. Even though Johnson lost to Ken Sims, Johnson said he was still very proud of his lift because he just goes out to do his best.



Photos by Spc. Steven J. Schneider Above: Spc. Chris Dice, 644th Transportation Company, cleans the windshield of a new M1114 Humvee before convoying back to LSA Anaconda from Kuwait. The 644th Trans. Co. is part of the 7th Transportation Battalion that picked up new Convoy Protection Platform M1114 Humvees.

Right: Sgt. Candice Bradshaw, 644th Transportation Company, ties down baggage before convoying back to LSA Anaconda.





Spc. David Kebane sets up the MK-19 atop a Humvee before convoying back to LSA Anaconda.

Soldiers begin testing Humvees

By Steven J. Schneider Staff writer

Soldiers from the 7th Transportation Battalion tested their new Convoy Protection Platform M1114 Humvees when they convoyed to LSA Anaconda from Kuwait Nov. 18.

Soldiers tested the 6.5 liter diesel engine's power, comparing the new vehicles with the other uparmored Humvees they used in the past.

Spc. Joseph Lara, a driver in the 644th Transportation Company, said he enjoyed driving the new vehicles and noticed improvements over their previous gun trucks right away.

Lara said the improved speed, acceleration and air conditioning system made the drive easier than normal.

Soldiers remained aware of their position at all times using the movement tracking system in their vehicles. The MTS allowed them to track all vehicles in the convoy and communicate with each other through an instant messenger type system.

Headsets in the vehicles allowed troops in the vehicle to communicate with each other better. Soldiers did not have to scream at each other to pass information through the vehicle.

The improved armor also provided an increased level of security.

2nd Lt. James Crow, 644th Trans. Co., reminded everyone on the convoy to use their extra protection.

"Gunners stay low," Crow said. "I know you want to look out and see what's happening, but we have the extra armor. Let's use it."

The Soldiers were prepared for the worst with new M240B Machine Guns, .50 Caliber Machine Guns and M-19 Grenade Launchers,

The convoy came to Camp Scania, Iraq, Nov. 19. Soldiers rested the night there, preparing to use the new vehicles on a gun truck mission for the first time. The vehicles split up with half escorting KBR trucks and the other half escorting third country nationals' trucks to LSA Anaconda.

According to Crow, this would be the most dangerous portion of the trip and test the new vehicles. Not that they hadn't been on their toes the whole way.

"We got to get our game faces on," Crow said when leaving to Iraq. "Once we cross that berm, it's a different story."

This level of awareness was kept up through the entire convoy, and the vehicles all made it back without any incidents.